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RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 001420

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHSA](#) [SENV](#) [CH](#) [TW](#) [XB](#)

SUBJECT: CLARIFYING U.S. POLICY ON TAIWAN PARTICIPATION IN
REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

REF: A. EAP/TC-OES/OMC EMAILS

[1](#)B. STATE 87368

[1](#)C. TAIPEI 1113

Classified By: Bill Stanton, AIT Director,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Taiwan has one of the world's largest fishing industries, and already plays an active role in various regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). Taiwan's participation in these RFMOs helps meet U.S. conservation and economic interests, as would its participation in new and emerging RFMOs. Nonetheless, Taiwan's concerns over its "sovereignty," as well as PRC objections to Taiwan's participation in international organizations, have the potential to detract from successful management of regional fisheries. We should continue to engage Taiwan on the importance of pragmatic fisheries cooperation, while refraining from debates over sovereignty/equal rights with Taiwan fisheries officials. At the same time, we should also continue to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in all international organizations where statehood is not a prerequisite, and encourage cross-Strait dialogue on fisheries issues without preemptive capitulation to likely PRC objections. END SUMMARY.

AN ACTIVE TAIWAN IS IN OUR INTEREST

[1](#)2. (C) Taiwan is home to one of the world's largest fishing industries by measures of both capture and aquaculture, and has an estimated 2,500 tuna-fishing vessels operating across the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans. Taiwan has also worked in partnership with a U.S. company to manufacture tuna boats for the fleet of American Samoa, which has an economy 80 percent dependent on its tuna canneries. Taiwan already participates in various fisheries organizations under different membership statuses, including as:

- a Commission Member in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention;
- a Cooperating Non-Party in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission;
- a Member in the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean;

- a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas;
- an Invited Expert in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission;
- a Member of the Extended Commission in the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna; and
- an Observer in the OECD Committee of Fisheries.

These organizations provide a forum for Taiwan's active engagement in regional fisheries management and conservation activities, in many cases supporting U.S. environmental and economic interests.

SOVEREIGNTY AND PRC OBJECTIONS

¶3. (C) Taiwan's participation in fisheries organizations is complicated at times by its non-state status. For instance, Taiwan cited "sovereignty" concerns in its unwillingness to accept unilateral boarding/inspection requirements in the U.S. North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) draft proposal this past November. In the case of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO), USG concerns have been raised internally about possible PRC objections to Taiwan's participation and role in this organization (reftel emails). These recent cases highlight the two salient and reoccurring themes in Taiwan's interaction with regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs): 1) the problem of sovereignty, and 2) continued PRC efforts to limit Taiwan's participation in international organizations. Both of these issues have the potential to

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detract from successful management of regional fisheries and negatively affect U.S. environmental and economic interests.

COMMENT: A PRAGMATIC WAY FORWARD

¶4. (C) We believe the USG should continue to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in all international organizations where statehood is not a prerequisite, but also draw a distinction between such participation and Taiwan's arguments asserting "sovereignty" and "equal rights." We should continue to stress the importance of pragmatic fisheries cooperation with the Taiwan authorities and refrain from engaging in sovereignty/equal rights debates with Taiwan fisheries officials.

¶5. (C) Taiwan and the PRC will have to work out a pragmatic modus vivendi, but the lack of formal Taiwan-PRC discussions on fisheries issue makes this difficult. Encouraging Taiwan and the PRC to enhance cross-Straits fisheries cooperation is in the U.S. interest. Closer cross-Straits fisheries engagement could help bolster confidence-building and dialogue between the two sides, and help defuse conflicts before they happen. Finally, in our view, the U.S. should only respond to formal PRC fisheries demarches, rather than preemptively anticipate and concede to PRC objections to our support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations.

STANTON